

**Ambassador Matthew Bryza**  
**Interview with ANS TV**  
**April 1, 2011**

**ANS TV:** First of all I want to say thanks for you that you give an interview to our television company, and if you want to say anything in Azerbaijan language, it's very nice to us. I want to say first question in Azerbaijan language.

Mr. Ambassador, it's nearly two months now that you have been in this position, and I think you have had enough time to close observe the social/political processes in Azerbaijan, so what are your ideas, what can you say about this?

**Ambassador Bryza:** [In Azerbaijani] I'm very happy to have you in my office... (in English) and I'm honored that you have asked me to do this interview today. I have enjoyed my interviews in the past with ANS, and I look forward to continuing our relationship.

My impression in my first two months here in Azerbaijan is that this is a very exciting and dynamic society, that there is a lot of vitality, life in the political system, and that hopefully Azerbaijan is moving through change that's evolutionary, that is helping to liberalize the society and therefore make it stronger in a step by step way.

**ANS TV:** Mr. Ambassador, we know that your nomination process wasn't easy, and due to this there were some kind of tension or inappropriate atmosphere within the USA-Azerbaijani relations. We can call it a lack of trust between the two countries. Now as you have been for two months in this position, what steps have you taken and you are taking now in order to eliminate that lack of trust between the two countries?

**Ambassador Bryza:** The number one, or the first goal I have to attain to achieve my broader strategy here is exactly what you say, to restore that level of trust that has long existed between our two governments and our two nations.

I think we shouldn't over estimate or exaggerate the difficulty that came into our relationship. Two friends always have issues on which they disagree. And despite those difficulties, some good things did happen. One thing I would like to highlight is the Azerbaijan government's successful creation of a financial monitoring service which has done an outstanding job in bringing Azerbaijan into

compliance with the requirements of both the European Union and the United States to fight money laundering. My colleagues at the United States Department of the Treasury are extremely pleased and impressed by Azerbaijan's work in this area.

So we continue it in some areas, but you're right, that we have a lot of work to do to rebuild the trust. My goal, what I have been doing is using all of my experience and all of my contacts that I've already had over the years in Azerbaijan to do just that, to rebuild the trust.

**ANS TV:** You are right, Mr. Ambassador, that you have had interviews with ANS TV before and at that time you were mainly acting as Minsk Group Co-Chair. The main topic of discussion of our interview was the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Now we know that the U.S. Co-Chair of the Minsk Group is Mr. Bradtke alongside two other Co-Chairs. So what suggestions, what advice can you give to the Co-Chairs in order to improve this resolution process? In order to take the process further?

**Ambassador Bryza:** My advice to them is to keep working the way they're working. They have proven to be professional diplomats of the highest caliber, and having followed a bit what they have been doing I see that they continue to make progress. They are creative and thoughtful and very committed to helping the parties reach a negotiated and peaceful settlement.

**ANS TV:** As to the Nagorno-Karabakh resolution, I would like to touch upon the latest development to do with the Nagorno-Karabakh in which a nine year old boy was hit by the sniper on the Line of Contact. As a high level diplomat I would like to get your opinion. We all know that this act is, this development, is against international law. We'd like to get your insights and opinion.

**Ambassador Bryza:** As I've said in the past, the use of force under any circumstances in the Nagorno-Karabakh should be condemned. There have, unfortunately, been a series of such shootings that have resulted in the deaths of people on both sides, and each of those deaths is a horrible tragedy.

In the case of each of these specific incidents, we don't really know what happened and so the Co-Chairs have said that there needs to be an investigation. They've called on the parties to investigate. We hope the investigations will continue. And the Co-Chairs have also called for the snipers to be pulled back on

both sides. So again, as the Ambassador of one of the Co-Chair countries I can only fully associate myself with those remarks and repeat them.

This is what needs to be done. Snipers pulled back, full investigation of all these tragic events, and no use of or no threat of use of force.

**ANS TV:** Mr. Ambassador, I would like to touch upon another issue that is on the agenda, which is to do with the restoration of the airport in the Armenian-occupied Khankendi city. The Armenian side is going to restore the activities of civil aviation there, and the Azerbaijani side has displayed very serious concerns on this issue stating that nobody can guarantee that the Armenian side is not going to use the airport for military purposes. The Armenian President yesterday stated that he himself personally is going to fly on the first flight from Armenia to the Khankendi which is on May 9, which indicates that the Armenian side is not going to retreat from its position which has caused the tension.

What would you suggest to both sides, parties, in order to lessen this tension?

**Ambassador Bryza:** I had not heard anything about potential Armenian plans to use the airport for military purposes. In general I will say there should be no relevance for military force in any way in this situation. As I've said before, any threat to shoot down a civilian airplane is something that we find unacceptable and, well, not in accordance with the commitments of the President of Azerbaijan to a peaceful settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh, but not in accordance with international civil aviation law in practice.

At the same time we recognize that this is a very difficult issue that raises serious questions on both sides. These questions related to civil aviation need to be worked out immediately between the parties, so we call on them to come together and have a discussion. Compared to the discussions or the announcements in previous days that talked about the use of force, we notice now with approval that Azerbaijan has begun discussing this issue with the International Civil Aviation Organization. From our perspective those sorts of discussions are of course a more appropriate way to respond to genuine and serious concerns than military threats.

We anticipate that Azerbaijan will make a very strong case for itself with the International Civil Aviation Organization, as is its right.

**ANS TV:** Mr. Ambassador at your first meetings and interviews with journalists we mentioned about the U.S.-Azerbaijan high level political military consultations that have been frozen for two years now. There you mentioned that these consultations are going to be restored soon. So do you have any news about the restoration time?

**Ambassador Bryza:** I don't have any news yet because since I made those statements publicly I haven't had a chance to meet again with my colleagues in the Foreign Ministry who are at the center of those discussions. But I hope to do so in the next few days, and I hope we can find a way to set a date. These are very important talks that mean a lot to us, to the United States. We are friends and partners of Azerbaijan and we wish to work through in the spirit of friendship and partnership these very serious questions.

Azerbaijan has been a great partner of the United States on security issues. We have achieved significant advances on fighting terrorism and I'm deeply grateful to the government of Azerbaijan to addressing our own concerns a few weeks ago about serious terrorist threats to my own embassy community.

So we would like to be strong partners for Azerbaijan as well, and one area where we can do a lot more together is helping Azerbaijan to continue protecting its own energy infrastructure.

**ANS TV:** Another issue that has been on the agenda, Mr. Ambassador, we note that you have been at the highest position in the State Department and now you are holding the ambassadorial post in Azerbaijan. I would like to touch upon the latest development in how is termed now the Arab quarter or the Arab street could relate the ongoing developments there with the U.S., the U.S. is playing an important role in those developments. Some pundits indicate that. I would like to get your opinion. How do you think? What is going on there first? And how are these developments going to end up?

**Ambassador Bryza:** As far as the developments in Tunisia and Egypt were concerned, the United States played no role whatsoever. It's possible that the people, citizens of Tunisian and Egypt were inspired by the democratic experience of the United States and our European allies, just as we hope other countries will be inspired by a successful evolution of Azerbaijan in the future as it becomes stronger economically and in terms of democratic reform.

The only concrete role we have played besides expressing our support for people realizing their democratic aspirations has been now what's going on in Libya. I'll talk about that in a second.

In the case of Libya we did originally take a leading role in the approval of and the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973. As President Obama has described, we are very proud that we were able to play a key role in preventing the massacre of potentially tens of thousands of people in Benghazi as well as establishing the no-fly zone and helping to establish the arms embargo against the Libyan government.

Now, as you know, we are turning over leadership and command of the implementation of Resolution 1973 to the organization NATO.

I'd also like to say something about revolutionary change. The United States is not in favor of revolutions. We are in favor of people being free, and as I said before realizing their aspirations for the same democratic freedom and economic prosperity we enjoy in our country. We believe the best way to achieve that is through continuous, evolutionary, step-by-step change. We will do everything we possibly can to partner with Azerbaijan, with the people, with the Government of Azerbaijan to move in that same step-by-step, continuous direction.

**ANS TV:** As you know the official Baku by interfacing the capacity of the representative or presidential office expressed its support to the military activities conducted by NATO in Libya. Now this causes the questions that I would like to address to you. As we know, as soon as the UN Security Council Resolution on Libya has been passed, the immediate actions on bombing Gadhafi, concrete actions have started. But there are also four other UN Security Council Resolutions that have been passed ten years ago, and which envisaged, which demands the soonest and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian occupational forces from the Azerbaijani areas, but unfortunately the world communities hasn't been as active as in the previous case as I mentioned. I would like to know why? Is this indicator of a double standard? What's the reason that the world communities isn't active in this case?

**Ambassador Bryza:** That's a very fair question, and we are grateful for the expression of support for the UN Security Council Resolution and the implementation of it that we received from Ali Hasanov. When I read his statement yesterday, I was quite pleased.

I would say of course it's not a question of double standard, it's a question of dramatically different situations.

God willing, this part of the world will never find itself in as disastrous a situation as the people of Libya did a month ago, with a tyrannical leader ready to and, in fact, trying to slaughter his own population. But still your question stands about those four Security Council Resolutions.

The answer is that in the case of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict we have a promising peace settlement process that's operating and making progress and holds the promise of negotiating a peaceful and mutually accepted settlement to that conflict.

It's fair to argue that more should be done and that all of us could be more active and I think we could never be too active in doing everything we can to secure that negotiated peace. But much to our benefit, that option is available to us whereas it was not available in Libya.

**ANS TV:** Mr. Ambassador, at the beginning of your interview you mentioned that you are glad to welcome us in your office and you stand ready to answer our questions. We have your close friend, a very interesting personality, and as a U.S. Ambassador there are many questions we would like to ask you and those questions were developed by your close friend and our Education Chief, Mr. Mirshahin [Aghayev]. Unfortunately we were not able to voice all our questions. We hope that you will have a chance to come to ANS and to participate on Mr. Mirshahin's program so that we'll be able to give all our questions and so that the good tradition set up by U.S. Ambassadors would be continued.

Thank you for the interview.

**Ambassador Bryza:** Thank you very much for the interview. Thank you to ANS for all the years and Mr. Mirshahin for our collaboration through the years. And of course I look forward to answering as many questions as you can think of. [Laughter].

**ANS TV:** Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.

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